

# Committee on Resources

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## Testimony

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### Subcommittee on Water and Power

Thursday, April 17, 1997

1324 Longworth HOB, 9:30 A.M.

**House Resources Committee  
Subcommittee on Water and Power  
Oversight Hearing on the CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
April 17, 1997**

**Statement of Richard K. Golb  
Executive Director, Northern California Water Association**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, my name is Richard Golb, I am the Executive Director of the Northern California Water Association (NCWA). NCWA is a non-profit organization that represents 51 agricultural water suppliers that collectively irrigate 750,000 acres of farmland in the Sacramento Valley.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the status of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program from the perspective of California's agricultural water users, as well as on the role of the Ecosystem Roundtable, and the importance of the President's fiscal year 1998 budget request for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

California's agricultural water interests, including NCWA, have worked diligently to resolve the chronic water supply and environmental problems that have plagued the Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta and San Francisco Bay (Bay-Delta). NCWA participated in the development of the 1994 Bay-Delta Accord, the development of California ballot Proposition 204, and the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. NCWA's Chairman Tib Belza, and Vice-Chairman Don Bransford, both serve on the Bay-Delta Advisory Council, along with environmental, urban, business and other agricultural interests from throughout California. I also serve on the CALFED Ecosystem Roundtable.

### **The Status of CALFED Bay-Delta Program - An Agricultural Perspective:**

California's agricultural water interests support the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and its objective, which is to develop and implement a plan to restore water supplies for California's cities, businesses and farms, and to restore fish and wildlife habitat in the Bay-Delta ecosystem. We also support the California Bay-Delta Water Coalition, and the Coalition's statement in support for full fiscal year 1998 federal funds for CALFED's short-term and long-term goals. Our support for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is consistent with Governor Pete Wilson's 1992 water policy that advanced the principle that all of California's interests must move forward together - and that individual interests can not move ahead of the others.

Following this important theme, CALFED adopted a set of six solution principles that agricultural interests, like NCWA, strongly support. The principles are intended to guide CALFED's selection of a final solution to ensure it is equitable to all interests, that it does not result in redirected impacts to other regions or interests, and that it is a durable plan that will address California's economic and environmental needs. We believe the success of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is imperative to ensure the long-term viability of

California's agricultural economy.

### **The Ecosystem Restoration Roundtable**

The Ecosystem Roundtable is a 19-member subcommittee of the Bay-Delta Advisory Council. The Roundtable, of which I am a member, is a representative work group comprised of California's environmental, agricultural, urban, fishing, conservation and power interests. Our mission is to assist CALFED staff in the evaluation of a proposed three to five year workplan that will identify environmental restoration needs and specific projects to address these needs. The Roundtable will review and recommend selected projects to the Bay-Delta Advisory Council for funding, and importantly, the Roundtable will also attempt to coordinate existing state and federal restoration programs in the Bay-Delta ecosystem. Our current goal is to provide recommendations on projects to the Bay-Delta Advisory Council this summer.

The Ecosystem Roundtable, thus far, is an accountable and balanced process. Clearly established scientific criteria have been adopted to ensure the merit of restoration projects that may be eligible for funding consideration, and CALFED's Solution Principles ensure that affected landowners are involved in project development.

These restoration projects and programs will help CALFED meet two important goals. First, they will improve fish and wildlife habitat in the Bay-Delta's fragile ecosystem. Second, in fulfilling this goal, the program will provide long-term water supply certainty for California's agricultural and business communities.

### **The President's Fiscal Year 1998 Budget Request**

Congress, in 1996, passed the California Bay-Delta Enhancement and Water Security Act, authorizing \$430 million for environmental restoration activities in the Bay-Delta. Signed by President Clinton, and combined with California voters support for Proposition 204, this law authorized \$143 million for each of the fiscal years 1998, 1999 and 2000. The first installment, President Clinton's fiscal year 1998 budget request of \$143 million, is included in the Department of Interior's budget for the Bureau of Reclamation. The President's budget documents commit to requesting the additional authorized \$143 million installments in fiscal years 1999 and 2000. The full appropriation of \$430 million is critical to ensure that CALFED successfully addresses California's water supply and environmental problems.

Congressional support for the President's request for \$143 million will allow CALFED to begin work on important long-term restoration projects that will provide significant water supply reliability benefits for California's agricultural and urban needs. The funding also will ensure that restoration projects that currently have state and federal approval, and a local cost-share, will not be delayed due to lack of federal support or funds. For example, state and federal agencies have recently encouraged water users on the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers, and in the Delta, to protect juvenile salmon by installing fish screens on their diversions. Many agricultural water suppliers have initiated these projects and are now in the design stages with construction possible this summer and next year, provided federal funds are available through the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

Overall, these projects, as well as other fish passage projects on tributary streams, such as construction of fish ladders, will immediately benefit species of concern, including the federally listed winter-run Chinook salmon, as well as the spring-run Chinook salmon. At the same time, this funding ensures greater certainty for irrigation supplies to area farmers, and increases the opportunities, under appropriate circumstances, for

water transfers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony before the Subcommittee. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.

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